

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A process for preparing an aqueous dispersion of pigment-containing polymer particles, comprising the steps of:

(A) removing an organic solvent from a mixture (I) comprising an organic solvent solution of a polymer, water and optionally a neutralizing agent by distillation under reduced pressure to give a solvent-removed product; and

(B) subjecting the solvent-removed product obtained in step (A) to a dispersion treatment,

wherein a pigment is added to the mixture (I) or the solvent-removed product.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): A process for preparing an aqueous dispersion of pigment-containing polymer particles, comprising the steps of:

(C) mixing an organic solvent solution of a polymer, water and optionally a neutralizing agent with each other to give a mixture (II);

(D) removing ~~an~~ the organic solvent from the mixture (II) obtained in step (C);

(E) mixing a solvent-removed product obtained in step (D) with a pigment to give a mixture (III); and

(F) subjecting the mixture (III) obtained in step (E) to a dispersion treatment.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): A process for preparing an aqueous dispersion of pigment-containing polymer particles, comprising the steps of:

(G) mixing an organic solvent solution of a polymer, water, pigment and optionally a neutralizing agent with each other to give a mixture (IV);

(H) removing ~~an~~ the organic solvent from the mixture (IV) obtained in step (G) by distillation under reduced pressure to give a solvent-removed product; and

(I) subjecting the solvent-removed product obtained in step (H) to a dispersion treatment.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): A process for preparing an aqueous dispersion of pigment-containing polymer particles, comprising the steps of:

(C) mixing an organic solvent solution of a polymer, water and optionally a neutralizing agent with each other to give a mixture (II);

(K) mixing the mixture (II) obtained in step (C) with a pigment to give a mixture (VI);

(L) removing ~~an~~ the organic solvent from the mixture (VI) obtained in step (K) to give a solvent-removed product; and

(M) subjecting the solvent-removed product obtained in step (L) to a dispersion treatment.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): A process for preparing an aqueous dispersion of pigment-containing polymer particles, comprising the steps of:

(N) mixing an organic solvent solution of a polymer with a pigment to give a mixture (VII);

(O) mixing the mixture (VII) obtained in step (N), water and optionally a neutralizing agent with each other to give a mixture (VIII);

(P) removing ~~an~~ the organic solvent from the mixture (VIII) obtained in step (O) by distillation under reduced pressure to give a solvent-removed product; and

(Q) subjecting the solvent-removed product obtained in step (P) to a dispersion treatment.

Claim 6 (Original): An aqueous dispersion of pigment-containing polymer particles obtained by the process of any one of claims 1 to 5.

Claim 7 (Original): A water-based ink composition comprising the aqueous dispersion of pigment-containing polymer particles of claim 6.

Claim 8 (New): An aqueous dispersion of pigment-containing polymer particles obtained by the process of claim 2.

Claim 9 (New): An aqueous dispersion of pigment containing polymer particles obtained by the process of claim 4.

Claim 10 (New): A water-based ink composition comprising the aqueous dispersion of pigment-containing polymer particles of claim 8.

Claim 11 (New): A water-based ink composition comprising the aqueous dispersion of pigment-containing polymer particles of claim 9.

Claim 12 (New): The process according to claim 1, wherein said organic solvent is at least one solvent selected from the group consisting of methanol, ethanol, isopropanol, n-butanol, tert-butanol, isobutanol, diacetone alcohol, acetone, methyl ethyl ketone, diethyl ketone, methyl isobutyl ketone, dibutyl ether, tetrahydrofuran, dioxane, benzene, toluene,

heptane, hexane, cyclohexane, methylene chloride, 1,1,1-trichloroethane, chloroform, carbon tetrachloride, and 1,2-dichloroethane.

Claim 13 (New): The process according to claim 2, wherein said organic solvent is at least one solvent selected from the group consisting of methanol, ethanol, isopropanol, n-butanol, tert-butanol, isobutanol, diacetone alcohol, acetone, methyl ethyl ketone, diethyl ketone, methyl isobutyl ketone, dibutyl ether, tetrahydrofuran, dioxane, benzene, toluene, heptane, hexane, cyclohexane, methylene chloride, 1,1,1-trichloroethane, chloroform, carbon tetrachloride, and 1,2-dichloroethane.

Claim 14 (New): The process according to claim 3, wherein said organic solvent is at least one solvent selected from the group consisting of methanol, ethanol, isopropanol, n-butanol, tert-butanol, isobutanol, diacetone alcohol, acetone, methyl ethyl ketone, diethyl ketone, methyl isobutyl ketone, dibutyl ether, tetrahydrofuran, dioxane, benzene, toluene, heptane, hexane, cyclohexane, methylene chloride, 1,1,1-trichloroethane, chloroform, carbon tetrachloride, and 1,2-dichloroethane.

Claim 15 (New): The process according to claim 4, wherein said organic solvent is at least one solvent selected from the group consisting of methanol, ethanol, isopropanol, n-butanol, tert-butanol, isobutanol, diacetone alcohol, acetone, methyl ethyl ketone, diethyl ketone, methyl isobutyl ketone, dibutyl ether, tetrahydrofuran, dioxane, benzene, toluene, heptane, hexane, cyclohexane, methylene chloride, 1,1,1-trichloroethane, chloroform, carbon tetrachloride, and 1,2-dichloroethane.

Claim 16 (New): The process according to claim 5, wherein said organic solvent is at least one solvent selected from the group consisting of methanol, ethanol, isopropanol, n-butanol, tert-butanol, isobutanol, diacetone alcohol, acetone, methyl ethyl ketone, diethyl ketone, methyl isobutyl ketone, dibutyl ether, tetrahydrofuran, dioxane, benzene, toluene, heptane, hexane, cyclohexane, methylene chloride, 1,1,1-trichloroethane, chloroform, carbon tetrachloride, and 1,2-dichloroethane.

DISCUSSION OF THE AMENDMENT

Claims 1, 3 and 5 have each been amended to recite that the organic solvent is removed --by distillation under reduced pressure--, as supported in the specification at the sentence bridging pages 9 and 10. Claims 1-5 have been amended by referring to the solvent as --the-- solvent after the first recital thereof. New Claims 8-16 have been added. Claims 8-11 depend from allowed Claims 2 or 4, and are supported by Claims 6 and 7 as originally filed. Claims 12-16 are supported in the specification at page 8, lines 7-15.

No new matter is believed to have been added by the above amendment. With entry thereof, Claims 1-16 will be pending in the application.